REBOOT!

Adventures on the Mainframe

An outline for a series of five minute programmes
of computer animation which link into half hour
episodes of fast moving family entertainment.

Whoopee Productions August 1989.

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Section one. Overview.

REBOOT! is a completely computer generated childrens television series, featuring the adventures of a group of colourful animated characters in their totally unique environment.

In the past, childrens television has taken many forms, featuring live action, live presenters, hand manipulated puppets, stop frame and traditional drawn animation. Computer graphics have been used for commercials, pop promos, corporate presentations, special effects and, recently, in film shorts.

REBOOT! will bring this versatile medium into the field of childrens television for the first time ever.

As things stand at present, computer animation systems are installed either within facility houses or in purely computer graphic companies.
For at least five years various production companies and advertising agencies have been considering the production of a computer generated television series of some kind. However, neither the facility house nor computer graphic company are set up to accommodate a long term project of this nature. The former are geared toward short turnaround, high yield jobs, and have a relatively high costing system, which results in an astronomical price tag for a series. The latter have to stay competitively alongside their facility house rivals in order to stay afloat.

Technology, however, never stands still, and these days more and more systems are arriving on the market, with greater capabilities and lower prices. It is only a matter of time before someone else is set up and capable of producing a series. The publicity, sales and marketing possibilities of such a venture are huge, and whoever does "get in first" stands to reap rich rewards.

The chance to be first into a new field can never be repeated, so now-and obviously the sooner the better-is the time for REBOOT!

REBOOT! will be produced on a BTS FGS4500 Elite computer animation system, which has had a long and distinguished "career" in the industry, constantly updating and changing to move with the times and meet their demands. With its excellent modelling and real time animation packages the FGS is capable of producing colourful, well animated graphics in a very short space of time. Its most notable and relevant success came with the production of the award winning Dire Straits pop promo, "Money for Nothing", one of the jobs which brought computer graphics to the forefront of advertising technology.

REBOOT!'s creators are also the people who will produce it, and between them they have considerable experience of many relevant aspects of the industry.

Ian Pearson instigated and controlled the graphics department at Rushes Post-production, and it was Ian who co-designed, co-directed and animated "Money for Nothing". He spent four years operating the FGS, producing hundreds of computer graphic sequences before moving onto the Board of Directors, from where he oversaw all of Rushes Graphics, and was instrumental in the introduction of the 'Harry' digital system into the company.

Gavin Blair worked for the same company for five years as an FGS operator, producing over two hundred sequences and winning acclaim and awards for his animations.

REBOOT! will need to establish a continued and integrated presence across a variety of media. in this specialised industry where editorial, design and promotion overlap, John Grace is uniquely qualified as an animation scriptwriter and project consultant.
In 1982 John achieved major success with the design, scripting and musical scoring of his stop-frame animation series 'The Adventures of Portland Bill'.
The 50 episode series reached number 4 in the ratings (Broadcast Magazines childrens programmes) and sold internationally. Subsequently John was invited to act as

writer/consultant on other animation series work for Central TV and TVS.
John has written over fifty books, adapted a major children's classic series for Macdonald Purnell and as a practising graphic designer has created and designed numerous teaching aids, activity books and annuals for major UK publishers.

With such a small and experienced team working on it, and without the usual restraints or distractions of the facility house or computer animation company, we feel that the smooth production and high quality of REBOOT! is assured.

Section two. Treatment.

On a typical day in the 1990's millions of programmes run on desktop PC's in classrooms all over the world. "Space Invaders" has made us computer literate but we are bedazzled by the technology. What is it within a computer that makes these increasingly powerful programmes run?

REBOOT! is about the world *inside* one such Desktop PC.

Mainframe Dataville is a bright, colourful, ordered, right-angled world. It's inhabitants, the 0/1 Logicals, keep the computer working at maximum efficiency.

At times random bits, bytes and architecture from programmes that are run on the computer are rebooted into the computers vast buffer and become marooned in the Archive. The Archive is thus an everchanging fantasy world where surreal and unexpected events are the norm. These happenings threaten to intrude into the Mainframe, influence the world of the 0/1 Logicals and disrupt the smooth running of the mainframe.

This scenario forms the basis of the REBOOT! series of adventures.

Chip, Dee and Ferret are known as the RAMPACK. They are Quasi-logical sprites who have taken on thought processes from the outside world. Unlike the Logicals they are inquisitive and unblinkered by linear thinking, investigating irregularities rather than ignoring them. This tends to lead them into a bewildering variety of wacky, wild and zany situations. Our heroes are able to reboot into and out of dangerous situations using 'Mini Busses'-hoverboards that can surf the static.

The computer's CPU may alert the Rampack to unusual happenings on the Mainframe or in the Archive and the Memory Bank can provide special 'equipment' they may need for their adventures.

Dataville's CPU and Memory Bank are run by MONITOR, an old and forgetful 'wise one', and VECTOR, a super-efficient but flawed 'John Cleese' Logical. The vast cupboards of the Memory Bank are the repository of universal knowledge and digital artifacts.

With guidance from Monitor and Vector the Rampack are able to interact with programmes that run on the computer, move amongst the denizens of the Archive, clean up the Mainframe and keep it functioning.
Chip and Dee are human in appearance and attitude, they think in less than logical ways, make mistakes and have good ideas. Ferret, their 'digital dog', true to the tradition of pet heroes, is loyal, brave-hearted and funny.

REBOOT!'s flexible format allows for modular episodes that vary between 5 or 25 minutes, usually building into large scale dramas. Not all REBOOT! episodes are large scale, however. '5 minuters' will show computer pastiche models of everyday events from the real world, focussing in on the small scale humour of minor events.

The Rampack's different thought processes earn them a sort of 'disrespectful respect' amongst the 0/1 Logicals, who keep the mainframe running with robotic precision. The Logical's linear thought processes and lifestyle are at odds with those of the outside world, as represented by the Rampack, and this interaction is the source of much of the series' humour.

In the large scale adventures, Dee, Chip and Ferret are involved in a vast, never-ending computer game to protect the Mainframe and thwart the plans of the forces of bad data. On the shadowy edges of the Archive is an electrostatic zone where bad data mix and the forces of chaos hide. Arch villains such as DR.COG, HACKER, MEGABYTE and the BYTE GANG hate the bright, ordered world of the 0/1 Logicals, and get a kick out of disrupting Dataville by trying to manipulate events in the Archive. THE BYTE GANG are comically inept, their goal: to steal data, become super-intelligent and take over Dataville so they can run the computer *their* way.

The REBOOT! format affords new and original opportunities for drama and humour to be married with stunning visual effects. The series will be funny and fast moving, sometimes surreal, always a visual feast. It will redefine existing ideas about computer graphics and international family entertainment.

Pilot Storyline.

The REBOOT! pilot will be an adventure comprising five x five minute episodes.

EPISODE 1-ZAPP!

With an accompaniment of loud zapping noises and visual effects, a bemused Chip reboots into a dark, enclosed space.

Chip is a data sprite who, through heavy computer game play, has acheived self consciousness-taking on thought processes from the outside world. By a phenomenal chance Chip did not clickfade when the game was switched off. Instead, he rebooted-but to where?

He seems to be inside a cupboard of some kind. Slowly he opens the door and peeps out. All around him are cupboards-hundreds of them! The walls-and even the ceiling-are covered in cupboards! Chip steps out and begins to explore.

After a couple of humourous encounters with the contents of some of the other cupboards, Chip hears squealing from behind a nearby door. Being an inquisitive sort, he opens it, and out jumps Ferret, a funny friendly dog-style sprite. Neither Chip nor Ferret know where they are or how they got there, but they are pleased to see each other, and set about exploring together.

Our heroes are discovered by Vector, who bustles them along to meet Monitor. He tells them in his distracted and rather forgetful fashion that he and Vector run and manage the CPU of Mainframe Dataville, and the place into which Chip rebooted is the Memory Bank, the repository of knowledge. Fascinated, they set out on a guided tour.

Meanwhile, in the shadowy environs of the Bad Data Zone, Megabyte, Kilabyte and Hacker comically scheme to take over Dataville. They haven't enough artificial intelligence of their own so their ideas aren't very good.

They decide to win power by robbing the memory bank.

Chip discovers that he is different from the 0/1 Logicals who keep the mainframe running. They like to work to an ordered, logical, well established pattern, have little imagination and *no fun!* They are most precise as they go about their labours on minibusses-hoverboards with heel controls.

Chip borrows a minibuss from a Logical 'on pause' and soon discovers that the boards can go somewhat faster than the workers usually make them go. While zipping about excitedly he goes into a swooping dive, kicks his heel down hard for a power boost-and reboots!

All of a sudden Chip finds himself somewhere in the Archive. He tries the same power boost technique again and reboots back to the Mainframe, but not before some annoying game sprites have hitched a lift. They shoot around, causing chaos amongst the Logicals of the Mainframe.

Megabyte and the Byte Gang-more by luck than judgement -use the disruption on the Mainframe to cover their approach to the Memory Bank. Whilst Vector chastises Chip and Ferret (rather unfairly, since he was instrumental in rounding up the mischievous sprites) for the trouble they have caused, the Byte Gang reboot through a portal into the Bank.

The Logicals are timid and stupid. The Byte Gang know this and therefore find it easy to be brave, intimidating them and pushing them around. Ferret, however, is made of stronger stuff, and when threatened he and Chip fight back. The bad guys are alarmed, panic instantly and flee. Frantically, and almost by accident, they grab units of Data from the Stores before rebooting away.

Monitor compliments Chip on his bravery, but Vector is priggishly unimpressed. While Chip is taken on a guided tour, Vector quietly leads Ferret away. If the sprite won't stay put in a cupboard, it'll have to be rebooted!!!

EPISODE 2-THE BAD ZONE

Chip is enjoying his guided tour of the mainframe until he notices that Ferret is missing and decides to go and find him. Monitor tells him not to bother, since he's just an unimportant two bit sprite-and quite a mischievous one-belonging in the Archives, not on the mainframe.

Realising what this means, Chip races to the CPU. He arrives to see Ferret sitting unsuspectingly in a pixel lift, until Vector hits the reboot stud and ZAPP!-Ferret is gone!-booted into the wastelands of the Archive. Chip dashes out of the CPU and steals a minibuss from a bemused Logical. Rebooting into the Archive, he heads for the Bad Data Zone to find Ferret...

The edge of the Archive is an eerie place. After some close encounters Chip finds Ferret fighting some ghosts from a Pacman game. He is defending a small girl-sprite from the forces of digital darkness. Using his hoverboard skills to spectacular effect Chip rescues the beleagued pair.

Once safe, the girl introduces herself as Dee, and the three become firm friends. (Chip can't shake the feeling that he knows Dee from somewhere!!!) They discover that from their vantage point that they can spy on the Byte Gang, who are comically trying out their plunder from the bank robbery. They keep plugging in and sifting through the random information-with hilarious results-until Megabyte suddenly upgrades! With a scarey new found clarity of mind, he plans to steal specific equipment from Dataville's CPU. This will enable the Byte Gang to build a machine that will give them mastery of the mainframe!

Our shocked heroes are suddenly discovered by a roaming and inquisitive Byte, who alerts the Gang to their presence. A wild chase ensues, with the trio balanced precariously on the single minibuss. When seemingly cornered in a dead-end corridor, our heroes just manage to pick up enough speed and reboot back to Dataville

to warn Monitor of the threatened danger.
Megabyte, meanwhile, angrily plots his return to the mainframe.

EPISODE 3-ROBBERY AT THE MEMORY BANK

Chip, Dee and Ferret are in the CPU, trying to warn Monitor of the Byte Gang's intentions. Monitor, however, is unable to remember the previous raid at all, and Vector busily refuses to listen to the "bothersome sprites." In Dataville, the 0/1 Logicals go happily about their work.

Chip and Dee are alerted to trouble-and immediately suspect the Byte Gang's presence. An edit memory overflow has occurred in the CPU, and the resulting data shower is creating havoc. The resourceful Dee overparks a full-sized buss over the 'manhole-cover' style overflow port and restores order.

Megabyte uses this coincidental diversion to slip into the Memory Bank, where he gathers information and artefacts from the vast library. Arming himself with all sorts of intelligence he captures Monitor, Vector and Chip, then summons Hacker and the rest of the Byte Gang onto the mainframe. Ferret escapes, and slips away to alert Dee. The brave pair come to the rescue, chasing the Gang back into the Archive where a comic battle ensues.

Monitor and Vector are saved, and Ferret is the hero of the hour upon returning to the mainframe. Megabyte, however, is unconcerned, for despite the loss of his prisoners, the mission was a success-he escaped with enhanced intelligence *and* a Digital Framestore...

EPISODE 4-DATA STORM

Megabyte interfaces the Digital Framestore with the Archives' Psionic Lattice, thereby opening the Psionic Gate between the Archive and the mainframe. This creates a Data Storm and brings a fleet of alien ships from a 'Space Invaders' game into the skies above Dataville!

From the relative safety of the CPU, Monitor equips the Rampack (his name for them) to fight the invader ships. Chip, Dee and the tenacious Ferret play for their lives and after lots of special FX, they win the battle for Dataville and seal the Psionic gate.

All seems well, and Monitor calls for a Credit Day to celebrate the victory. But in the Bad Data Zone more trouble is brewing, as Hacker adapts Megabyte's framestore into a Negative Digitiser...

EPISODE 5-THE BYTE BEAST

It's Credit Day in Dataville. The Mainframe is on idle, as Dee entertains the bemused Logicals by teaching Ferret a trick or two. Vector patiently watches Ferret play dead, loop the loop, roll over and then race around 'siccing' imaginary Bytes on command, before scornfully pointing out how unnecessary it all is. Couldn't the silly sprite have gone in a nice efficient straight line, instead of all this loop-the-loop business?

Dee sighs and is about to reply when, suddenly, the Byte Gang reboot with a flourish into the centre of Mainframe. Chip immediately moves to challenge them, but this time they are confident of success and swagger towards the CPU.

As the Rampack approach, a number of little Bytes crowd together in front of Kilabyte, who uses Hacker's Negative Digitiser to form them into a huge and terrifying Byte Beast! Chip and Dee fight to defend the mainframe, but it seems hopeless-every time the Beast is zapped it splits and takes on new forms, each more powerful than the last.

The two sprites buy enough time for the Logicals to get to safety, but they are trapped by Kilabyte in a Photoniser Field. The Byte Gang laugh gleefully as the Beasts wreak havoc and run rampant on the mainframe. Megabyte gloats and claims Dataville for himself...

Only Ferret is free-the future is in his paws. He shapes up to Hacker and Kilabyte-who is still brandishing the Negative Digitiser. Just as all seems lost, Dee has an idea, and whispers to Ferret to 'loop-the-loop' and 'play dead'. In true, 'over-the-top' Hollywood style, Ferret dies of fright in front of the startled villains.

Kilabyte's new-found arrogance gets the better of him, and he cockily ambles over to Ferret's still body.

"SIC 'EM!" Shouts Dee, and Ferret roars into action, scaring the pants off Hacker and Kilabyte, who drop the Digitiser with fright and run away screaming, Ferret snapping at their heels. As the weapons hits the floor, the Photoniser Field is momentarily broken. Chip zips forward and like a shot scoops up the Digitiser. With it the Rampack defeat the Beast and send the Byte Gang running for the Archive with their power leads between their legs.

Once more the citizens of Mainframe Dataville can celebrate-after restoring the smooth operation of the computer, of course-and Monitor tells Vector that Ferret is allowed to stay on the mainframe, since he is a very special sprite indeed.

Meanwhile, in the Bad Data Zone, Megabyte-without the stolen artificial intelligence once more-vows (like all good villains should) revenge on the Logicals of the mainframe.

OPENING TITLES/MUSIC

THE REBOOT! RAP is a 'Bat Dance' style musical montage complemented by live action and computer animation. Like a movie trailer, the titles tell the story that never was, of how by accident three sprites inherit thought processes from the world outside the computer, and use them for the force of good on the Mainframe.
The 'trailer' profiles a strange world, its inhabitants, architecture and the RAMPACK's comic adventures.